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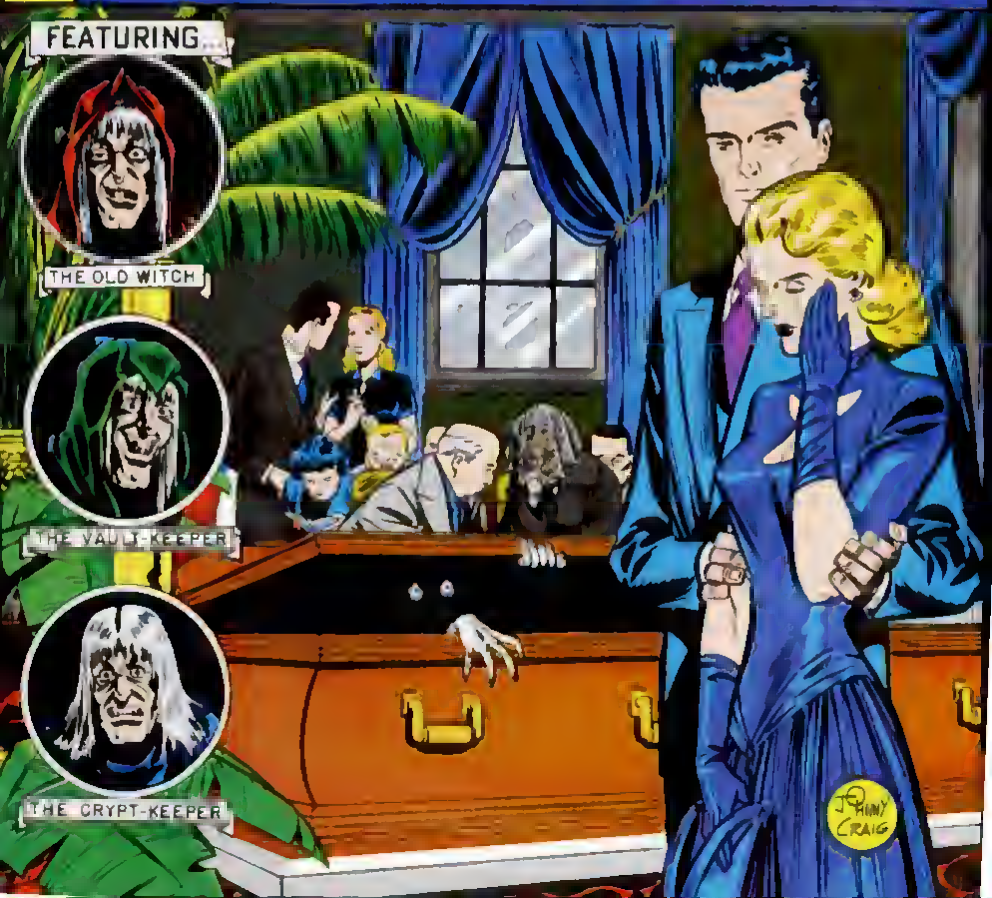

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE. HEE! DON'T JUST STARD THERE! COME IN! COME IN! YOU ALL KNOW *ME* BY NOW... THE OLD WITCH, MISTRESS OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR*! DRAW UP CLOSE TO THE BUBBLING, STEAMING CAULDRON! I HAVE A STORY TO TELL YOU! A STORY THAT WILL ABSOLUTELY *HORRIFY* YOU! A YARN OF *TERROR*... OF *REVENGE*... OF *DEATH!* THIS TASTY TALE, WHICH I AM ABOUT TO DISH OUT TO YOU, I CALL...

A STRANGE UNDERTAKING...

MY STORY BEGINS ONE COLD WINTRY DAY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A SMALL TOWN! SNOW BLANKETS EVERYTHING! IT COVERS THE COUNTRYSIDE LIKE A WHITE SHROUD. HEAVY, COLD, SILENT! IT LAYS THICK ON THE ROOF TOPS! IN DRIFTS AGAINST THE HOUSES. AND DEADLY STILL ON THE GRAVES OF THE TOWN CEMETERY...

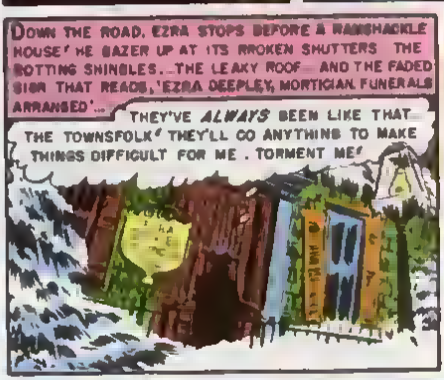
HMMPH! GROUND'S FROZEN... FROZEN *SOLID!* LUCKY THING I HAVEN'T ANY CUSTOMERS! COULDN'T *BURY* 'EM, ANYWAY!

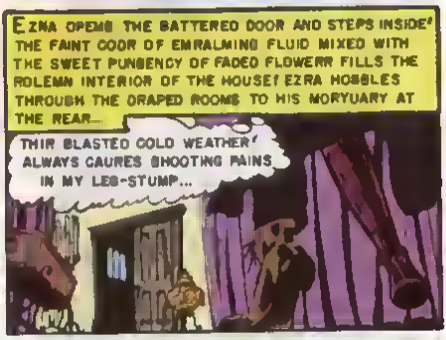
HOWDY, EZRA! ADMIRING YOUR HANDYWORK?

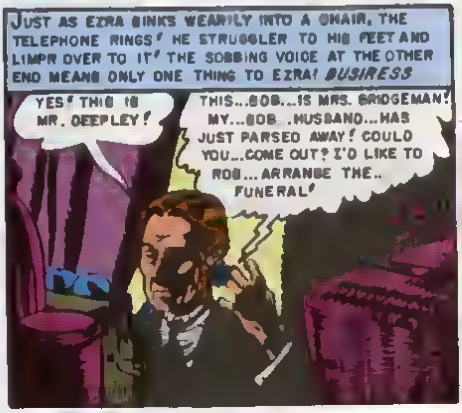
THAT'S THE CARETAKER OF THE CEMETERY GREETING EZRA DEEPLEY, THE TOWN UNDERTAKER...
JUST CHECKING CLEM. JUST CHECKING!
I DIG YUH, EZRA! HAW, HAW!

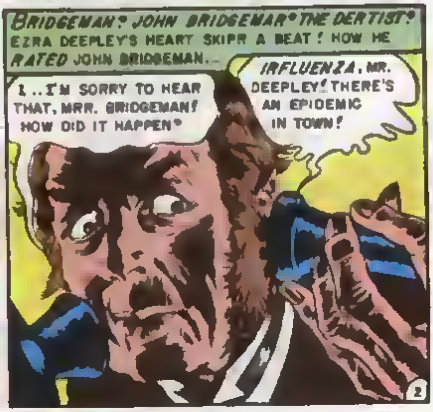
THAT'S THE WAY IT ALWAYS IS WITH EZNA DEEPLEY! THEY KID HIM. JOKE WITH HIM. INSULT HIM!.. JURT BECAUSE HE'S AN UNDERTAKER..
DON'T TAKE ANY WOODEN COFFINS, EZRA!
WHY DON'T YOU DROP DEAD, CLEM?

EZRA DEEPLEY TAKES A LAST LOOK AROUND THE SNOW-LADEN CEMETERY, TURNS, AND PLODS ON HOME...
THEY HATE ME! ALL OF THEM! THEY DESPISE ME FOR WHAT I AM! WHY... WHY? I DON'T HARM THEM! I JUST... BURY THEM AFTER THEY'RE GONE!


DOWN THE ROAD, EZRA STOPS BEFORE A RAMSHACKLE HOUSE! HE GAZES UP AT ITS BROKEN SHUTTERS THE ROTTING SHINGLES...THE LEAKY ROOF— AND THE FADED SIGN THAT READS, 'EZRA DEEPLEY, MORTICIAN. FUNERALS ARRANGED'...
THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT THE TOWNSFOLK! THEY'LL GO ANYTHING TO MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT FOR ME. TORMENT ME!


EZNA OPENS THE BATTERED DOOR AND STEPS INSIDE! THE FAINT ODOR OF EMBALMING FLUID MIXED WITH THE SWEET PUNGENCY OF FADED FLOWERS FILLS THE SOLEMN INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE! EZRA HOBBLES THROUGH THE DRAPED ROOMS TO HIS MORTUARY AT THE REAR...
THIS BLASTED COLD WEATHER! ALWAYS CAUSES SHOOTING PAINS IN MY LEG-STUMP...


JUST AS EZRA SINKS WEARILY INTO A CHAIR, THE TELEPHONE RINGS! HE STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET AND LIMPS OVER TO IT! THE SOBBING VOICE AT THE OTHER END MEANS ONLY ONE THING TO EZRA! BUSINESS
YES! THIS IS MR. DEEPLEY!
THIS...SOB...IS MRS. BRIDGEMAN! MY...SOB...HUSBAND...HAS JUST PASSED AWAY! COULD YOU...COME OUT? I'D LIKE TO SOB...ARRANGE THE... FUNERAL!


BRIDGEMAN? JOHN BRIDGEMAN? THE DENTIST? EZRA DEEPLEY'S HEART SKIPS A BEAT! HOW HE HATED JOHN BRIDGEMAN...
I...I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT, MRS. BRIDGEMAN! HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
INFLUENZA, MR. DEEPLEY! THERE'S AN EPIDEMIC IN TOWN!

THE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE, AND JOHN BRIDGEMAN'S BODY IS BROUGHT TO EZNA'S ESTABLISHMENT' AFTER THE MOURNING WIFE AND RELATIVES LEAVE, EZRA WHEELS THE DECEASED INTO HIS MORTUARY.
YOU... JOHN BRIDGEMAN' YOU HATED ME TOO, BECAUSE OF MY PROFESSION' REMEMBER WHEN I CAME TO YOU WITH ...A CAVITY...
YOU JOKED WITH ME.. CHIDED ME...'
WELL, WELL! EZRA DEEPLEY! WHAT'S COOKING AT THE CREMATORY, EZRA? HAW, HAW!
I ..I HAVE A TOOTH-ACHE, DOCTOR!
'...AND THEN YOU TOLD ME THE TOOTH WOULD HAVE TO COME OUT'
SORRY, EZRA! I CAN'T GIVE YOU GAS! I'M FRESH OUT! THIS MAY HURT!'
I...I'M READY, DOCTOR!
YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE, DIDN'T YOU? YOU DELIBERAYELY HURT ME! YOU COULD HAVE GIVEN ME NOVOCAIN. SOMETHING ..ONLY YOU PREFERNED TO PULL THE YGOTH. PAINFULLY! WELL, JOHN BRIDGEMAN, NOW I CAN GET EVEN!
THE FUNERAL IS HELD THE NEXT DAY' THE LITTLE GROUP OF MOURNERS STAND ABOUY THE COFFIN AD A BNIEF BERVICE IS HELD IN THE BITING GOLD! A LITTLE WAY OFF, EZRA DEEPLEY WATCHES...
IF THEY ONLY KNEW, JOHN BRIDGEMAN' IF THEY ONLY KNEW WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE NOW...WHAY I DID TO YOU... TO GET EVEN...
THE SMALL BAND OF BLACK-CLAD PEOPLE MOVES BILENTLY AWAY AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERVICE, AND EZNA STEPS FORWARD..
WHAY YOU GOING TO DO NOW, EZRA? YOU GAIN'T BURY YHE POOR CRITYER' GROUND'S FROZEN!
HELP ME GET YHE COFFIN TO THAT MAUSOLEUM, CLEM' WE'LL STONE IY THENE TILL THE GROUND YHAWS'
EZRA AND CLEM CARRY THE COFFIN TO A MAUSOLEUM! THE NAME CANVID ABOVE THE DOOR IN LARGE LETTERS READS...'DEEPLEY'...
BONNA STONE 'IM IN YOUR OWN MAUSOLEUM, EH, EZNA'
YES' YHE FAMILY WILL NEVER KNOW' AND IN YHE SPRING, WE'LL BUNY HIM'
3

THE PHONE IS NINGING AS EZRA ENTERS HIS HOUSE! ANOTHER DEATH FROM INFLUENZA! THE EPIDEMIC IS GETTING SERIOUS

WHO? WHO DID YOU SAY...?

THE MAYOR, HIMSELF! FREDRICK DUNHILL!

EZRA'S BRAIN REELS! *TWO* WITHIN A WEEK! TWO OF HIS MOST *HATED ENEMIES!* FIRST THE SADISTIC DENTIST, JOHN BRIDGEMAN, AND NOW.. *NOW*, FREDRICK DUNHILL, THE MAYOR.. THE POLITICIAN .. THE *THIEF!* EZRA'S THOUGHTS GO BACK..BACK TO THAT FATEFUL DAY...

SORRY, MR. DEEPLEY! THE MAYOR *JUST* ISSUED IT! A *NEW ORDINANCE!* YOU'LL HAVE TO *MOVE* YOUR MORTUARY OUT OF THE TOWN LIMITS!

BUT, HOW *CAN* I? THIS PROPERTY IS ALL I *HAVE!* I CAN'T *AFFORD* TO BUY ANOTHER PLACE!

THAT NIGHT, AS EZRA STANDS OVER THE DEAD MAYOR..

YOU FORCED ME OUT... *FORCED* ME TO SELL SO THAT I HAD TO MOVE TO *THIS* RUN-DOWN PLACE— FORCED ME TO SELL *CHEAP!* LATER, I FOUND OUT IT WAS YOUR *BROTHER-IN-LAW* WHO BOUGHT MY PLACE! AND THE TOWN BOUGHT IT FROM *HIM* THE NEXT YEAR...

HE *SPLIT* WITH YOU, *DIDN'T* HE, FREDRICK DUNHILL? YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW *SPLIT THE PROFIT WITH YOU!* OVER *TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!* YOU *CHEAT!* YOU *LYING POLITICIAN! DIRTY LIES... DIRTY PROMISES!* WELL, I'LL *SHOW* YOU! I'M GOING TO GET *EVEN, NOW!*

THE NEXT DAY WHEN MAYOR DUNHILL IS BURIED, EZRA AGAIN WATCHES THE PROCEEDINGS...

LUCKY FOR THEM THEY CAN'T *SEE* YOU, FREDRICK DUNHILL! LUCKY FOR THEM THEY CAN'T *SEE* HOW I GOT *EVEN!*

...AND AFTER THE MOURNERS LEAVE...

GONNA PUT HIM WITH THE *OTHER*, MR. DEEPLEY?

YES, GLEM! C'MON! HELP ME!

SO A SECOND COFFIN IS STORED IN EZRA DEEPLEY'S OWN MAUSOLEUM! STORED TILL THE SPRING THAW WHEN IT CAN BE BURIED.

THIS EPIDEMIC'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS, EH, EZRA?

OH SHUT UP, GLEM!

THE THIRD VICTIM OF THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC IS HORACE STREETWALL... THE TOWN BANKER! EZRA IS ELATED! THIS IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! OLD MOREY-BAGS STREETWALL! HOW EZRA HATES *HIM!* EVER SINCE THE TIME EZRA WENT TO SEE HIM... TO BORROW MONEY...

THE PLACE... IT'S SO RUN-DOWN, MR. STREETWALL! I WAS FORCED TO MOVE TO IT... BUT...

YOU WANT TO BORROW MOREY TO ALTER IT, EH, DEEPLEY?

YES, SIR! THE ROOF LEAKS, THE SHINGLES ARE BROKEN AND ROTTED! I...

SORRY, DEEPLEY! YOU'RE A POOR RISK! MY ANSWER IS *NO!* GOOD-DAY!

AND SO... WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR EZRA TO EMBALM HORACE STREETWALL'S BODY...

MONEY, STREETWALL! THAT'S *ALL* YOU THOUGHT ABOUT! MONEY! *MONEY* WAS YOUR *LIFE*... YOUR *MIND!* WELL, NOW YOUR LIFE IS OVER... AND *I*... *I'M* GOING TO GET *EVEN*...

AFTER THE FUNERAL OF THE TOWN BANKER, A THIRD COFFIN IS STORED IN EZRA DEEPLEY'S MAUSOLEUM...

GHOUND'S STILL FROZEN, EH, EZRA?

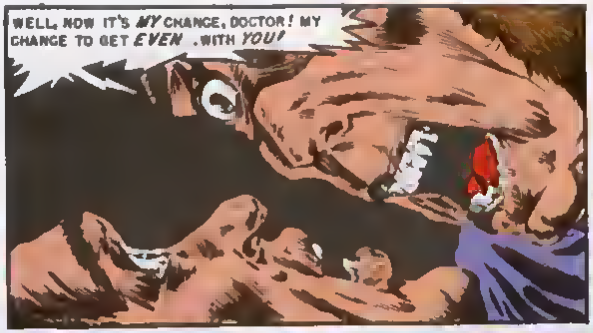
YES! HMMM! GETTING CROWDED IN HERE!

TWO DAYS LATER... EZRA DEEPLEY HAD A FOURTH CUSTOMER! A FOURTH VICTIM OF THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC! THIS TIME HE RECEIVED THE NEWS WITH ECSTATIC JOY! HIS WORST ENEMY... HIS VERY *WORST*... CLAUDE FOWLER... THE MAN WHO HAD AMPUTATED EZRA DEEPLEY'S LEG!

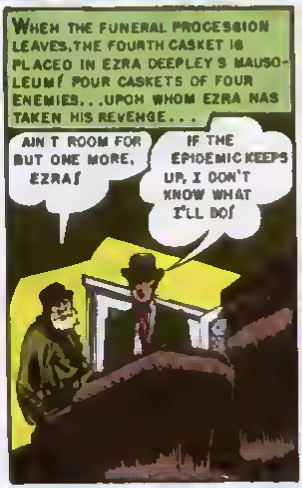
DOCTOR FOWLER'S BODY IS BROUGHT TO THE MORTUARY! EZRA LOCKS THE DOOR AFTER THE SOBBING FAMILY LEAVES AND STANDS OVER THE PROSTRATE CORPSE...

BUTCHER! DRUNKEN BUTCHER! REMEMBER *ME*, DOCTOR FOWLER? REMEMBER *EZRA DEEPLEY*? THE MAN WHOSE LEG YOU *NEEDLESSLY AMPUTATED!?*

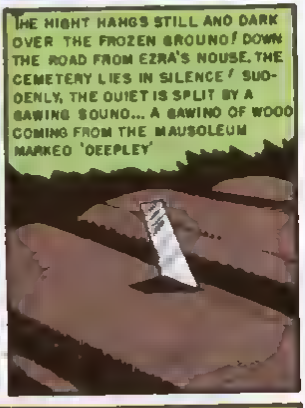
YOU CAME TO THE HOSPITAL *DRUNK! I* HAD HAD AN ACCIDENT... SEVERELY INJURED MY LEG! YOU AMPUTATED! YOU *COULD* HAVE *SAVED* IT,... ONLY *NO*... YOU WERE TOO *DRUNK*... TOO FULL OF *WHISKEY!* INSTEAD... YOU BUTCHER... YOU *CUT IT OFF!* NOW, I'M FORCED TO WEAR AN *ARTIFICIAL* LEG... *SEE?*


WELL, NOW IT'S MY CHANCE, DOCTOR! MY CHANCE TO GET EVEN WITH YOU!

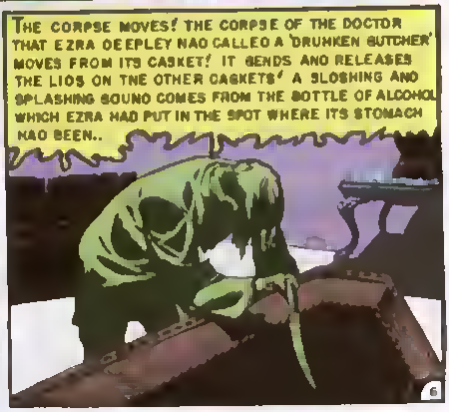
THE NEXT DAY, AS DOCTOR CLAUDE FOWLER'S FUNERAL IS BEING HELD...
TOO BAD, DOCTOR FOWLER! TOO BAD THEY CAN'T SEE YOU AS YOU REALLY ARE... AS I'VE FIXED YOU!

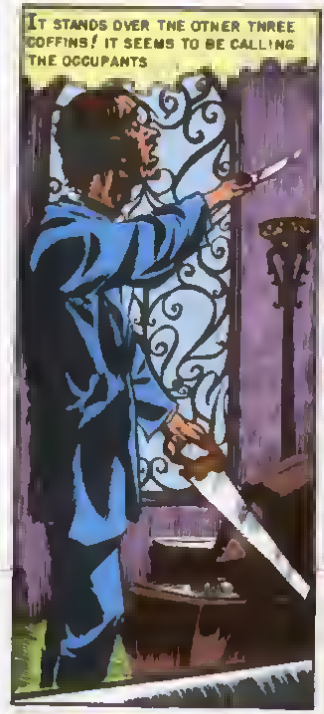

WHEN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION LEAVES, THE FOURTH CASKET IS PLACED IN EZRA DEEPLEY'S MAUSOLEUM! FOUR CASKETS OF FOUR ENEMIES... UPON WHOM EZRA HAS TAKEN HIS REVENGE...
AIN'T ROOM FOR BUT ONE MORE, EZRA!
IF THE EPIDEMIC KEEPS UP, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO!

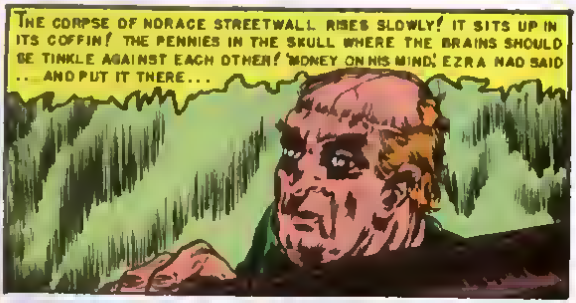
BUT... UNLUCKILY FOR EZRA DEEPLEY, THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC SUBSIDES AND THERE ARE NO MORE DEATHS! EZRA SITS, ONE NIGHT, IN HIS MORTUARY... LAUGHING TO HIMSELF...
HEH, HEH! I FIXED THEM... THE FOUR OF THEM! I FIXED THEM GOOD!


THE NIGHT HANGS STILL AND DARK OVER THE FROZEN GROUND! DOWN THE ROAD FROM EZRA'S HOUSE, THE CEMETERY LIES IN SILENCE! SUDDENLY, THE QUIET IS SPLIT BY A GRATING SOUND... A GRATING OF WOOD COMING FROM THE MAUSOLEUM MARKED 'DEEPLEY'

THE LID OF THE CASKET IS SAWED OPEN AND THE CORPSE OF DOCTOR FOWLER RISES! INSTEAD OF HANDS, A SAW AND A BUTCHER KNIFE DANGLE AT ITS SIDES... THE SAW AND THE KNIFE THAT EZRA HAD SEWN THERE...


THE CORPSE MOVES! THE CORPSE OF THE DOCTOR THAT EZRA DEEPLEY HAD CALLED A 'DRUNKEN BUTCHER' MOVES FROM ITS CASKET! IT BENDS AND RELEASES THE LIDS ON THE OTHER CASKETS! A SLOSHING AND SPLASHING SOUND COMES FROM THE BOTTLE OF ALCOHOL WHICH EZRA HAD PUT IN THE SPOT WHERE ITS STOMACH HAD BEEN..

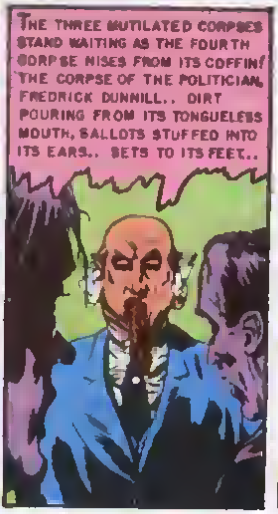

IT STANDS OVER THE OTHER THREE COFFINS! IT SEEMS TO BE CALLING THE OCCUPANTS

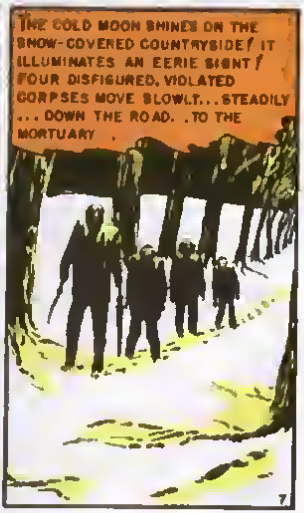

THE CORPSE OF HORACE STREETWALL RISES SLOWLY! IT SITS UP IN ITS COFFIN! THE PENNIES IN THE SKULL WHERE THE BRAINS SHOULD BE TINKLE AGAINST EACH OTHER! 'MONEY ON HIS MIND,' EZRA HAD SAID ... AND PUT IT THERE...

THE CORPSE OF BANKER STREETWALL GETS SHAKILY TO ITS FEET! A SACK OF PENNIES SWINGS WHERE ITS HEART HAD BEEN... CLINKING AGAINST ITS RIBS...

THE BANKER'S CORPSE STANDS BESIDE THE DOCTOR'S WAITING..

THEN THE CORPSE OF DENTIST JOHN BRIDGEMAN RISES FROM ITS CASKET! IT GRINS A TOOTHLESS GRIN, SHOWING WHERE EZRA DEEPLEY HAD REMOVED ALL OF ITS TEETH! ITS EYES ARE GONE . TORN FROM THEIR SOCKETS! 'NOW, DENTIST BRIDGEMAN HAS *TWO CAVITIES* IN HIS FACE!' EZRA HAD SAID...


THE THREE MUTILATED CORPSES STAND WAITING AS THE FOURTH CORPSE RISES FROM ITS COFFIN! THE CORPSE OF THE POLITICIAN, FREDRICK DUNNILL.. DIRT POURING FROM ITS TONGUELESS MOUTH, SALLOTS STUFFED INTO ITS EARS.. SETS TO ITS FEET..


THE COLD MOON SHINES ON THE SNOW-COVERED COUNTRYSIDE! IT ILLUMINATES AN EERIE SIGHT! FOUR DISFIGURED, VIOLATED CORPSES MOVE SLOWLY... STEADILY ... DOWN THE ROAD. .TO THE MORTUARY .

MANY TOWNSPEOPLE ARE AWAKENED THAT NIGHT BY THE HYSTERICAL SCREAMING AND SHRIEKING THAT COMES FROM EZRA DEEPLEY'S HOUSE! WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE, THE NEXT MORNING...
PLACE IS A SHAMBLES!
LOOKS LIKE THERE'D BEEN A GOOD FIGHT HERE! BUT WHERE'S EZRA DEEPLEY? THERE'S NO TRACE OF HIM!
GLEN BODKIN, THE GENETERY CARETAKER, RUSHES INTO THE MORTUARY! HE IS PALE...HIS EYES WIDE IN TERROR...
COME QUICKLY! I...I FOUND HIM! I MEAN...WHAT'D LEFT OF HIM!
WHERE, GLEN? WHAT HAPPENED?
GLEN HAD LOOKED IN EZRA'S MAUSOLEUM! HE HAD NOTICED THERE WERE FIVE, NOT FOUR, COFFINS! HE HAD FOUND EZRA IN THE FIFTH...
WHAT ARE THOSE OTHER COFFINS DOING HERE?
GROUND'S BEEN FROZEN! COULDN'T BURY 'EM! BUT LOOK WHAT EZRA'D DONE TO THE BODIES INSIDE!
THE MEN LOOKED! THEY OPENED EACH COFFIN! THE DENTIST WITH HIS TEETH PULLED OUT, CAVITIES FOR EYES! THE BANKER WITH PENNIES IN HIS SKULL INSTEAD OF BRAINS... THE OTHERS...
MAD, I SAY! EZRA DEEPLEY MUST HAVE BEEN MAD!
THAT'S NOTHING! HERE! HE'S IN THIS ONE...
THE MEN CROWDED ABOUT AS GLEN OPENED THE FIFTH COFFIN... EZRA'S...
GOOD LORD!
OUGH-H!
GULP!
HOW...HOW HORRIBLE! BUT HOW, WHO DO YOU SUPPOSE DID THIS TO HIM!
MAYBE...MAYBE THEY DID...IN REVENGE!
HEE, HEE! WELL? LIKE IT? FEEL A LITTLE SICK? REMEMBER THE OLD SAYING...HE WHO LAUGHS LAST LAUGHS BEST? WELL...IN EZRA'S CASE, NOBODY LAUGHED! WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEY DID TO EZRA? WHAT'S THE MOST HORRIBLE THING YOU CAN THINK OF? HEE, HEE! THAT'S IT! READY FOR MORE? THEN I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE VAULT-KEEPER! B'BYE, NOW!
OH, BY THE WAY! LOOK FOR MY 'HAUNT OF FEAR' IN CRIME!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

THEIR HEAVY, CLATTERING FOOTSTEPS ARE NEARER NOW! YOU TURN THE CORRER THE FAMILIAR CORNER ..
ONE MORE...BLOCK! ONE...GASP...MORE..
YOU HURL YOURSELF DOWN THE STONE STEPS..THE STEPS THAT YOU HAVE COME DOWN SO MARY TIMES...THE STEPS TO YOUR BASEMENT HOME...
THEY'LL NEVER FIND ME.. NOW! NEVER..
IT IS DARK! YOU LIE QUIETLY, SCARCELY BREATHING! YOU CAN HEAR THEIR CLUMSY FOOTSTEPS RUNNING BY IN THE STREET ABOVE ...THEIR ANGRY SHOUTING...
HE'S TURNED IN SOMEWHERE!
WE'LL GET 'IM, THE FIEND!
YOU FEEL WARM...SAFE NOW! YOU'RE HOME...BACK WHERE YOU BELONG! THEY CAN'T HARM YOU HERE! YOU RELAX! YOU STRETCH OUT COMFORTABLY AND RELAX! A MILLION THOUGHTS RACE WILDLY THROUGH YOUR MIND! A MILLION THOUGHTS RACE BACK... BACK TO THE BEGINNING...TO WHEN YOU FIRST MET HER...
SHE STOOD THERE IN THE LIGHT OF THE LAMP ...SWEETLY...DEMURELY! HER EYES FLASHED WITH A FIRE...A STRANGE MYSTERIOUS FIRE! YOU MOVED TOWARD HER... AS IF DRAWN BY SOME INVISIBLE THREAD...
HMMPH! THERE'S NOTHING AS LONELY AS A STRANGE TOWN! NO ONE TO TALK TO! NO FRIENDS! I...SAY... THAT GIRL... SHE'S SMILING AT ME!
I...I'M A STRANGER IN TOWN! I JUST GOT IN TONIGHT! YOU
I KNOW! I WATCHED YOU GET OFF THE TRAIN!
SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL! YES...YOU CAN REMEMBER THAT! SHE LOOKED INTO YOUR EYES AND YOUR HEART POUNDED IN YOUR CHEST! HER LIPS WERE FULL AND RED! WHEN SHE SPOKE, THEY TOUCHED AND SEEMED TO CLING FOR A MOMENT, RELUCTANT TO BE PARTED ONCE MORE...
YOU...YOU'LL BE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO STAY?
WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT... I DO NEED A ROOM!
SHE TOOK YOU BY THE HAND! HER JET BLACK HAIR SHIMMERED AS A BREEZE LAZILY CARESSED IT! YOU WENT WITH HER! YOU COULD NOT RESIST HER...
I LIVE...DOWN YONDER!
BUT...I CAN'T...MOVE IN ON YOU! I...

MILLIONS OF LITTLE THOUGHTS *RACE* THROUGH YOUR MIND' YOU LIE THERE.. AND THINK' BUT YOU CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER CLEARLY' YOU OBJECTED' YOU REMEMBER THAT' YOU DION'T WART TO IMPOBE' SHE BHOOK HER HEAD' BHE PRESSED CLOSE TO YOU... HER FULL RED LIPS BO NEAR...SONEAR...

I..I..

KISS ME'

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT? THERE'S WHERE THE BLANKS BEGIN' THOSE PAUSES.. THOSE DANK PLACES IN YOUR LINE OF THOUONTS BESAN THENE' YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THE REST OF THAT NIGHT OR TNE WHOLE NEXT DAY' BUT THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, YOU AWOKE TO FIND..

YOU' BUT..I.. MUST HAVE SLEPT'

I STAYED AN EXTRA DAY .. FOR TOU'

YOU FELT WEAK' TOU TRIED TO RISE' SHE BENT AND KISSED YOU' SHE TOUCHED TOUR EYELIDS GENTLY..

SLEEP BLEEP, MY DEAN' TOMORROW TOU WILL FEEL *STRONGER*' TOMORROW YOU WILL BE.. *READY*' AND I... I... WILL BE *GONE*'

AGAIN YOU SLEPT.. A DEAD, DREAMLESS SLEEP' WHEN YOU AWOKE IT WAS NIGHT AGAIN' ANOTHER DAY HAD COME AND GONE' AND SHE.. THE DARK GIRL WITH THE FIERY EYES...

SHE.. SHE'S GONE, *TOO*'

YOU LOOKED ABOUT' IT WAS A DARK, DISMAL PLACE SHE HAD TAKEN YOU TO' TWO DAYS...TWO WHOLE DAYS YOU HAD SLEPT' WHAT HAD SHE *DONE* TO YOU? YOU WENT OUT...UP THE STONE STEPS TO THE STREET..

GOT TO *FIND* HER' GOT.. TO..

YOU SEARCHED EVERYWHERE' YOU LOOKED IN BARS, BACK ROOMS, NIGHT CLUBS, JUKE-BOX JOINTS.

NAAH' I AIN'T SEEN ANY BROAD FITTIN' *THAT* DESCRIPTION' BUT I'D CERTAINLY *LIKE* TO.

THANKS, ANYWAY'

YOU WENT ON.. ON' A HATRED GREW WITHIN YOU' AS THE NIGHT DRAGGED ON IT INFECTED..FESTERED' SHE'D *DRUGGED* YOU.. ROBBED YOU' YOU HATED HER... *HATED* HER' SUDDENLY.

THENE *THERE* SHE IS'

YOU RAN TO HER! YOU WENE HOT...HOT WITH RAGE! AND THE OTHEN FEELING, ..TNE STHANGE FEELING ...THE CNAVING WAS STRONG, TOO! A CNAVING FOR.. FOR SOMETHING! BUT YOU KNEW NOT WHAT...
I... I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!
WHA...? I... WHO ARE YOU?
ANOTHEN BLANK SPOT! THEY BECOME MORE FREQUENT NOW! WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DID YOU DO TO HEN? TNE NEXT THING YOU CAN NEMEMBEN IS STANDING OVER HEN... LOOKING DOWN! BUT HEN FACE...HEN FACE HAD CHANGED! YOU WERE NO LONGEN ANGNY.. AND THE CNAVING WAS GONE..
BUT...IT... IT ISN'T HER! IT...IT'S SOME ONE ELSE! AND SHE'S.. DEAD!
YOU HAD MADE A MISTAKE! A HORNIBLE MISTAKE! YOU HAD KILLED THE WRONG GIRL! YOU RAN, TERRIFIED, FNOM THE SCENE! YOU RAN UNTIL YOU COULD NUN NO MONE! THEN, YOU CAME TO THEM! YOU WENE GASPING FON BNEATH! YOU WENE TINED, AND THEY WERE BEFORE YOU...THE STEPS...
THE PLACE WHERE I SLEPT LAST NIGHT!
YOU NEMEMBER THE SKY GETTING LIGHT WITH THE COMING DAWN! YOU WENT DOWN THE STEPS! YOU WENT INSIDE! AND THEN, THERE'S ANOTHER OF THOSE DANK PLACES! PENHAPS YOU SLEPT AGAIN! PERHAPS NOT! TNE NEXT THING YOU CAN NEMEMBEN IS THE FLASHING LIGHTS...TNE TNEATEN MANQUEE...
A MOVIE! I HAVEN'T SEEN A MOVIE IN AGES.
YOU STEPPED UP TO THE BOX OFFICE YOU NEACHED INTO YOUN POCKET! YOU HAD FONGOTTEN! SHE HAD TAKEN YOUN MONEY! YOU STOOD THENE ... FNUSTNATED... ANGNY...
PLEASE STEP AWAY FNOM THE WINDOW! NEXT...PLEASE!
THEN YOU SAW HEN! SHE WAS COMING OUT OF THE MOVIE! SHE HAD SEEN THE PICTUNE! SHE'D SEEN IT.. WITH YOUR MONEY...
GOT TO FOLLOW HEN! TOO CROWDED AROUND HERE!
YOU TRAILED HER! THE NAGE WITHIN YOU WAS A NOARING STORM WHEN SHE FINALLY TUNNED INTO A DESENTED STNEET! AND THAT CNAVING... THAT STRANGE CRAVING
DID YOU ENJOY THE... MOVIE?
LET GO OF ME... YOU'RE... HURTING...

ANOTHER BLANK! ANOTHER SPACE OF TIME YOU CAN'T REMEMBER! AS YOU LIE THERE QUIETLY... LISTENING.. YOU TRY TO RECALL! BUT YOU CANNOT! THE NEXT THING YOU CAN REMEMBER IS STANDING OVER HER... NOT ANGRY... NOT CRAVING... JUST *TIRED*...

GOOD LORD! I'VE MADE ANOTHER... *MISTAKE!*

YES! YOU REMEMBER *THAT!* THE WRONG WOMAN... *AGAIN!* YOU TURNED! A CAR WAS COMING ALONG THE STREET! YOU FLED DOWN A BLACK ALLEY...

GOT TO GET AWAY! GOT TO RUN! I... I'M A *MURDERER!* SHE'S *DONE* SOMETHING TO ME... DRIVEN ME... *OUT OF MY MIND!*

YOU RAN! YOU RAN UNTIL YOU HAD NO MORE STRENGTH IN YOUR LEGS! AND THEN YOU WERE THERE... THERE, WHERE THE STEPS WENT DOWN...

TIRED... SLEEPY... WANT TO... REST...

ANOTHER OF THOSE MEMORY BLANKS! YOU MUST HAVE SLEPT AGAIN! IT WAS NIGHT ONCE MORE WHEN YOU CAME TO...

EXTRA... EXTRA... READ ALL ABOUT IT!

HERE, BOY...

YOU REACHED INTO YOUR POCKET! THE MONEY... YOU'D FORGOTTEN! YOU STARED AT THE HEADLINES... STUTTERING...

I... I MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN MY WALLET... I...

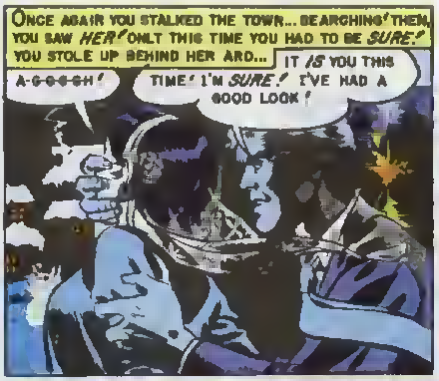
YEAH! SURE! HERE! TAKE IT! PAY ME BACK!

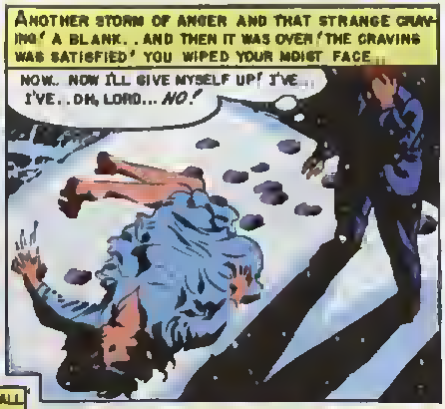
YOU TOOK THE PAPER! THE BOY LOOKED AT YOU WITH CONTEMPT, BUT YOU TOOK IT ANYWAY! THE HEADLINES ...THE HEADLINES HAD CAUGHT YOUR EYE...

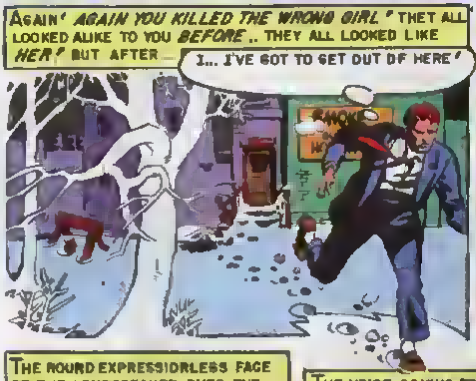
'TWO UNEXPLAINED DEATHS IN TWO NIGHTS. TWO YOUNG WOMEN FOUND DEAD ON TWO SUCCESSIVE NIGHTS! CAUSES OF DEATH NOT YET DETERMINED! SUSPECT MURDER!'

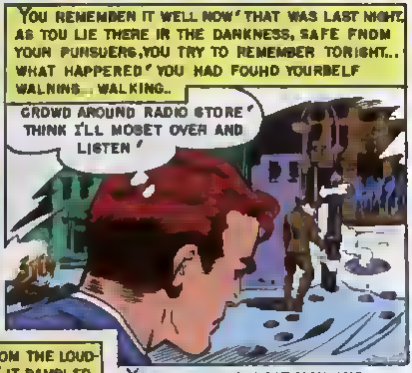
YOU CRUSHED THE PAPER INTO A CRINKLED BALL AND FLUNG IT TO THE GROUND! IT CALLED *YOU* A *DANGEROUS KILLER*...

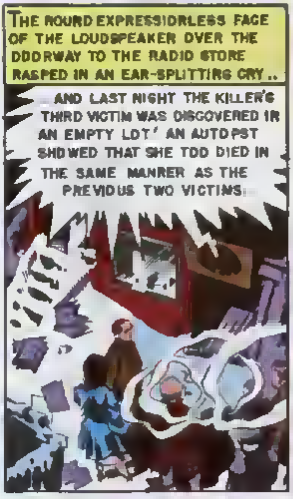
I... I'LL GIVE MYSELF UP... *AFTER* I GET *HER!*

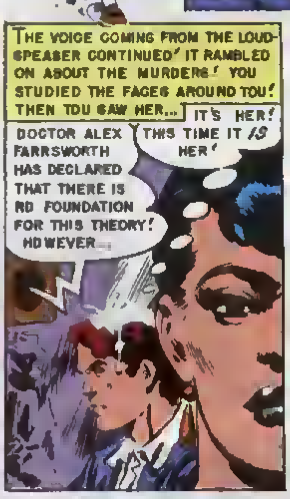

ONCE AGAIN YOU STALKED THE TOWN... SEARCHING FOR THEM, YOU SAW HER! ONLY THIS TIME YOU HAD TO BE SURE! YOU STOLE UP BEHIND HER AND...
A-GGGGH!
IT IS YOU THIS TIME! I'M SURE! I'VE HAD A GOOD LOOK!

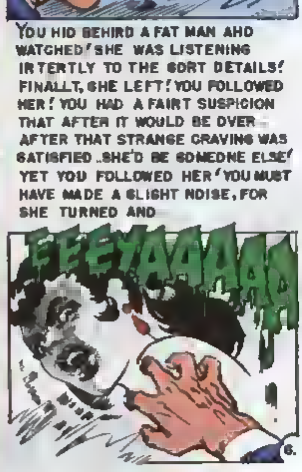

ANOTHER STORM OF ANGER AND THAT STRANGE CRAVING! A BLANK.. AND THEN IT WAS OVER! THE CRAVING WAS SATISFIED! YOU WIPED YOUR MOIST FACE...
NOW.. NOW I'LL GIVE MYSELF UP! I'VE... I'VE.. OH, LORD... NO!


AGAIN! AGAIN YOU KILLED THE WRONG GIRL! THEY ALL LOOKED ALIKE TO YOU BEFORE.. THEY ALL LOOKED LIKE HER! BUT AFTER...
I... I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
SMOKE


YOU REMEMBER IT WELL NOW! THAT WAS LAST NIGHT. AS YOU LIE THERE IN THE DARKNESS, SAFE FROM YOUR PURSUERS, YOU TRY TO REMEMBER TONIGHT... WHAT HAPPENED! YOU HAD FOUND YOURSELF WALKING... WALKING..
CROWD AROUND RADIO STORE! THINK I'LL MOSEY OVER AND LISTEN!


THE ROUND EXPRESSIONLESS FACE OF THE LOUDSPEAKER OVER THE DOORWAY TO THE RADIO STORE RASPED IN AN EAR-SPLITTING CRY..
...AND LAST NIGHT THE KILLER'S THIRD VICTIM WAS DISCOVERED IN AN EMPTY LOT! AN AUTOPSY SHOWED THAT SHE TOO DIED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE PREVIOUS TWO VICTIMS.


THE VOICE COMING FROM THE LOUDSPEAKER CONTINUED! IT RAMBLED ON ABOUT THE MURDERS! YOU STUDIED THE FACES AROUND YOU! THEN YOU SAW HER...
IT'S HER!
DOCTOR ALEX FARRSWORTH HAS DECLARED THAT THERE IS NO FOUNDATION FOR THIS THEORY! HOWEVER...
THIS TIME IT IS HER!


YOU HID BEHIND A FAT MAN AND WATCHED! SHE WAS LISTENING INTENTLY TO THE SORT DETAILS! FINALLY, SHE LEFT! YOU FOLLOWED HER! YOU HAD A FAINT SUSPICION THAT AFTER IT WOULD BE OVER... AFTER THAT STRANGE CRAVING WAS SATISFIED..SHE'D BE SOMEONE ELSE! YET YOU FOLLOWED HER! YOU MUST HAVE MADE A SLIGHT NOISE, FOR SHE TURNED AND...
EEEYAAAAA
MUSIC

THEY HAD HEARD HER SCREAM! THEY CAME RUNNING! YOU HAD HAD TO RUN... TO ESCAPE! NOW, YOU ARE LYING IN THE DARK... AND YOU CAN HEAR THEIR FOOTSTEPS IN THE STREET ABOVE...

WHAT WAS THAT THE MAN ON THE RADIO SAID... ABOUT THE VICTIMS' *BLOOD* BEING *DRAINED* FROM THEIR *BODIES*?

THE WORK OF A VAMPIRE! THE RADIO HAD BLARED! YOU LOOK AROUND! A *VAMPIRE*? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE? THE LIGHT OF DAWN IS BEGINNING TO STREAM IN THE CELLAR WINDOW...

GOOD LORD! I... I'M LYING IN A *COFFIN!*

YOU TRY TO GET UP! THE HEAVY FOOTFALLS... COMING DOWN THE STONE STEPS...

THEY... *FOLLOWED* ME... TO MY *RESTING PLACE!*

THE DOOR... THE POUNDING... SMASHING... SPLINTERING...

SHE DID IT! SHE *MADE* ME A VAMPIRE! THAT *GIRL*... *THAT NIGHT*...

THEY RUSH AT YOU! YOU LIE BACK IN YOUR COFFIN, CRINGING! THEY STARE DOWN AT YOU... THEIR OUTRAGED EYES SHINING IN THE TORCH LIGHT...

SOMEONE... GIMME THE *STAKE*...

THE FAT-FACED FLABBY ONE LEANS OVER YOU! YOU CANNOT RISE! THE CRAVING... THE CRAVING FOR BLOOD WENT UNSATISFIED TONIGHT! YOU ARE *WEAK!* YOU CANNOT PUSH THE *STAKE* ASIDE AS HE PLACES THE POINT UPON YOUR CHEST! WHEN HE TAKES THE IRON MALLET AND LIFTS IT HIGH, YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH... AND AS THE MALLET FALLS *YOU SCREAM*

AAAAAAA

YOU'LL REMEMBER THE END... THE TEARING OF FLESH... THE CRUNCHING OF BONE... THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN AS THE STAKE DIGS INTO YOUR THROBBING HEART! AND LASTLY *SHE*... THERE IN THE CROWD... SMILING AT YOU. THEN LAUGHING, *LAUGHING*. AND HER LAUGHTER WILL FOLLOW YOU INTO THE BLACKNESS!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

THE END

HEH, HEH! WELL, THAT'S MY TALE, FIENDS! AND A *PIERCING FINISH* IT HAD, TOO! I HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOURSELF... BEING A *VAMPIRE*... EVEN IF YOU DID MAKE A FEW MISTAKES! ON WELL, IN THE END, *THEY* DIDN'T *MISTAKE YOU!* THEY DID A REAL *THOROUGH* JOB! RIGHT *TH-R-OUGH!*

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear OW,

My name is Tony Lewandowski. I am 12 years old. I have a lot of your mags. Here is a reprint picture of you from HAUNT 4. I'm your #1 fan. Bye now and sweet nightmares.

[or] I m your #1 fan by now. And sweet nightmares.

Tony Lewandowski — Oak Forest, IL

So, Tony, I couldn't easily read the last sentence of your letter but I'm thinking it's one of the two versions I printed above.

Oh, no, Tony! I'm not going to run that picture! I don't take a good picture. My hair was a mess. I look too fat! I look too old! I had my eye shot (No, the other one)!

—OW

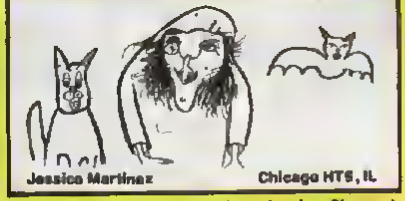
Dear Russ,

Thanks for another great set of stories here in HAUNT #5! I really enjoy these old stories. I wasn't around the first time these comics came out, though I have heard much of them in the years since I started reading comics. The historical significance of these comics is rather important to me. Inasmuch as these were featured in the testimony before Congress so much as well as Bill Gaines' testimony. Thanks for putting these stories out for the younger folks to read. It's good for them to see stories with a real literary slant to them, and not just fright fests from cover to cover. Until next time.

Carl Pietrantonio — Laredo, TX

Still and all, Carl, I like a little fright from time to time, myself!

—OW



Jessica Martinez — Chicago HTS, IL

Last issue, I printed a letter from Jessica. She sent me a little drawing of me, but I didn't have room for it then. Here it is now, and I'm proud to devote an inch of my Niche to Jessica!

—OW

Dear Russ,

I wrote to you when I was in the fourth and fifth grade. Now I'm in the sixth grade, and I'm still writing to you. You never did answer any of my letters, all I got back was some pages out of some comic books. The only thing I ever got from you that I wanted was a catalog. If you read this letter, PLEASE ANSWER IT!!! If you send me anything, please don't let it be a newsletter. I hate those things! The first time I wrote to you, I was reading VAULT and it said that if I wrote to you I would get a free real picture of the Vault-Keeper. This is about the fourth time I wrote to you and I still don't have a picture!!! You COULD write at least five lines.

Dwayne L. Heath — Detroit, MI

Aw, Dwayne! Have a heart, sweetie! We love you, in our warped way, and have run a letter from you in WEIRD FAN 3 and another in CRYPT 6, and the notorious 'Dangerbread Man' drawing you did in FINE ARTS #6 (which ran in WEIRD FAN 5 and 2FIST 5); but without a street address on your letters we here in GhouLunatic Central couldn't let you know! I see your address has been taped to THIS letter, so I can get in touch with you this time. But, repeat after me, FEARfolk: "I will put my address on my letters (and drawings)." Remember, we won't PRINT your address without your okay.

Secondly, I'll take this opportunity for my annual reminder that the original 1950s offer of actual GhouLunatic Photos was mentioned at the end of a few of the stories reprinted in the defunct 84-pg reprint comics of a few years ago and not edited out. We meant to do NEW photos in the future, but the future hasn't got here yet. We'll be in touch.

—OW

Dear OW,

I just happily finished this month's EC selection, and was browsing through Overstreet trying to figure out why INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION is worth more than WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY, when I encountered an entry which caused me to look back at the comics I had just finished:

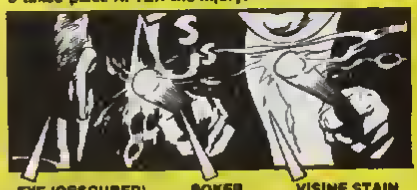
HAUNT OF FEAR...5 - injury to eye panel pg 4

Being the completist I am, I looked at page 4 (and 3 and 2 and 1) of your HAUNT OF FEAR 5: no injury to eye panel! Now, I really am not an absolutist on admiring injury to eye panels, but I do have one question. Who screwed up, you or Overstreet?

Bob La Tremouille
875 Massachusetts AV #31 — Cambridge, MA 02139

Injury to eye panels are one of my obsessions, as you can well see (bef I can't!). My latest Overstreet "Price Guide" is from 1987, and it doesn't mention any injury panels in HAUNT. This must be a later addendum.

Now, you legal-types out there tell me, what constitutes an official injury panel? Below is the detail from HAUNT 5, page 12 (page 4 of 2nd story, "Horror in the Freak Tent!"), panel E. Not being a 3D comic, it's hard to judge, but the white-hot poker is several inches away from the victim's eye. Panel 6 takes place AFTER the injury.



EYE (OBSCURED) — POKER — VISINE STAIN

Either way, it was an eye-ful thing to happen! That guy was out of luck, for sure!

—OW

Dear Old Witch, Mistress of the Haunt of Fear,

I really like your magazine. I also like CRIME, SHOCK, VAULT, W SCI, and CRYPT, but yours is the best. The first HAUNT I read was #3, and the best story was "Nightmare!" I also like the story you did in CRIME #4. But I am a newcomer to EC so I have a few questions, like

1) Who is Brocketmouth/boy/Ed?

2) Is Dr. deRange a GhouLunatic?

3) On the TV show of CRYPT, I saw "Dig That Cat...He's Real Gone!" When will that comic be in your magazine?

4) Random House Publishers put out a CRYPT book. It shows pictures from the comic books. Is this "official"?

When I started reading EC Comics, my sister joined in, then my Dad, now my Grandma! Keep up the good work! I hope this gets into HAUHT. Hauntingly Yours

Peter Hayes — Santa Clara, CA

By the numbers:

1) Turn to page one of this comic. Look at the first panel. See the character at the bottom (No, the other one, the one with the long upper lip. THAT's the one!)? That's Ed Anon, our pencil-sharpening, word-processing, errand-running factotumoid! I live in the Haunt of Fear, near the Crypt of Terror and the Vault of Horror; he lives right next door in the Urn at Surial. (Oh, I do not! —Ed)

2) Doctor Homer ("Dreamy") deRange, esteemed French-extraction para-scientist, and guru of our SF titles (WEIRD SCIENCE, WEIRD FANTASY and WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY; clever with words, these science-people!) letter columns, is not officially a GhouLunatic. He is here while on sabbatical from Marmion College, where he is head of the Necrocpistolary Department. (Confidentially, I have a crush on him. And he has the bruises to prove it!)

3) "Dig..." will be in HAUNT 21. Which no one has reprinted before so you'll just have to wait (Hee-hee!).

4) Random House's "Crypt" books are indeed official, and geared for the younger set. They feature original panels and NEW art by that big tall drink of country crick water, Jack Davis.

5) Whoops! You didn't have a number 5!

Glad to hear EC is multigenerational at your house, Peter. 'Home is where the HAUNT is!' —OW

NEXT ISSUE

This month: WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY #5 and CRIME #5. Next month: The 7th issues of CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Don't forget VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED! Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, $3 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, $1.50 each; issues #4 and up, $3 each. Add $0 per order ($10 outside US) to: SAH

We want letters! Write to:
HAUNT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
HAUNT OF FEAR #5 (MAR/APR 1951)

COVER by Johnny Craig

A Strange Undertaking	Graham Ingels
So They Finally Pinned You Down!	Wally Wood
A Grave Gag!	Jack Kamen
Cheese, That's Horrible!	Jack Davis

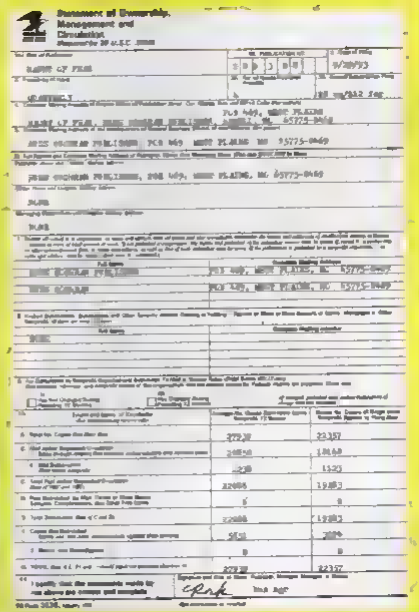
We overlook letters if published. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters, so let us know your address on the individual letter.

THE OLD WITCH'S CARTOON CAULDRON

The Crypt-Keeper thot he pulled a fast one on me in my last issue, stealing a bit of my lettercolumn for an excerpt from his FINE ART page! But Ol' Bow-Legs didn't get away with it (Someone SNITCHED on you, Crypto! Not mentioning any names, but his initials are VK!). Just to get even, I sneaked over to the Crypt and SPIRITED away these GHOSTLY GRAPHICS to share with you, my little FEARfans!

—OW

All theen HAUHTnd HORRORS are by William Pearson, Rutland, VT. —OW



FAN CLUB NEWS #1

PRESENTED BY THE VAULT-KEEPER

We're not an actual CLUB (more like a BAT; vampire, that is!), but here we exchange thots and info on our favorite subject...MAD! Er, I mean, EC!! —VK

Dear Russ,

I'd like to start off by saying I'll try to keep this one short, but it's hard to. I love writing you and EC fans.

Back in 1974 when East Coast Comix was [doing EC] reprints were there more than twelve comics in the East Coast set? In reprint #12 it said East Coast was going to print another six issues and would continue to reprint more ill things work out with the sales of them. As far as I knew there were twelve. While we're on the East Coast subject I would also like to know if you might have or know where I might be able to obtain some of the merchandise that was advertised in the East Coast reprints which were: the EC cover postare (CRYPT #38 and VAULT #32); the hard cover 'EC Horror Library,' the EC Portfolios, the SQUA TRONT magazines; MONSTER TIMES #10 and the 1972 EC convention book [EC LIVES!]. Was there ever a title from EC called TALES FROM SPACE?

Robert Borruso — Staten Island, NY

Yep! An even dozen issues from East Coast Comix, Inc., during the 70s. The indicia listed the series as "E C. Classic Reprint." Without that little walk in the sun, we might have forgotten how to ambulate! East Coast solicited for subscriptions of 6-issue spans, thus the "print another six issues" concept you inferred from their final issue. They did announce the contents of the projected #13 (WEIRD FANTASY #9) and maybe advertised it, I forget.

We have certain issues from that series available for sale!! See the listing below. For completeness' sake, I list here the contents of the balance of the line.

#1, CRYPT OF TERROR #1 (TALES FROM THE CRYPT #46), #2, WEIRD SCIENCE #18 (1952), #3, SHOCK #6.

We DO NOT have copies of the above listing available for sale! Check the box BELOW for that!

Who can help Robert locate copies of the other EC goodies he wants?

I can't think of a TALES FROM SPACE from anyone, let alone EC, not even an Annual or a Canadian reprint. (I did discover a Canadian reprint of CRIME thind WEIRD SUSPENSTORIES, tho; neat, huh?) —VK

$15 each:

#3 (SHOCK #12)
#5 (WEIRD FANTASY #13, 1952)
#7 (VAULT #26)
#18 (HAUNT #23)
#4 (HAUNT #12)
#6 (CRIME #25)
#8 (TWO-FISTED #34)

$10 each:

#11 (WEIRD SCIENCE "#12", actually #1 from 1950)
#12 (SHOCK #2)

When ordering please identify as EAST COAST #?? (for example, EAST COAST #3). Add $5 per order S&H ($10 outside US).

Dear EC,

I would like to be a part of a great fan club. It would be something very special to me. I've been reading EC's since the 70s, when the old MADs were reprinted in MAD SPECIALs. I wish that I still had them but unfortunately they are gone. I now have an old hardcover, "The Ridiculously Expensive MAD," that reprints the superhero parodies from the 50s MAD.

I became aware of the horror stuff from FAMOUS MONSTERS ads. I then read about them in, of all things, Stephen King books. "Danse Macabre" and "The Bogeyman" from "Night Shift" gave descriptions of stories drawn by Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. The King movie, "Creepshow," of course, was an EC horror comic-influenced production.

Then came the HBO TV show version of CRYPT that definitely revived the interest to read EC comics. I like the way that Gladstone put the 64-page books out. CRYPT backed with CRIME, VAULT with HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE/FANTASY, etc. The problem was that they weren't well printed. The colors were sort of faded and the type wasn't very clear. Still, they were a great way to be introduced to the comics.

The Cochran [64-page] reprints of the following year were somewhat better than the Gladstone ones. But they didn't feature the covers for the second bonus issue inside. That was corrected by the 5th and 6th issues though, and the color, type, and printing in general were very well done. A marvelous improvement. Although the premiere issue of CRYPT was done as an awful yet collectible blow up edition.

The third time around is fantastic in that you can see them chronologically done.

My favorite artists are Wally Wood, Jack Davis, Al Williamson and Johnny Craig. My favorite tales are "Radioactive Child!" by Harvey Kurtzman, "Ambush!" by Davis and "Flying Machine" by B. Krigstein.

Some of these people are no longer with us now, but their work lives on in these incredible reprints. I don't know if you have any info on some of the other books like IMPACT or SADDLE JUSTICE. Like, who drew the issues, the main staff, who wrote what? Krigstein wrote and drew the IMPACT story "Master Race" and Jack Kamen drew most of the PSYCHOANALYSIS yarns. Any more details and facts would be fine. Maybe a reader would like to write to me and tell me in.

I am interested in an old book titled "EC Horror Library" dated 1973. It featured various stories from the ECs. And are the SQUA TRONT fanzines still available?

William Pearson — Rutland, VT

Whoa! I LIKED the tabloid-sized XL CRYPT #1 ($6+ S&H as listed in the EAST COAST info, this page)! Even tho I didn't get my shot at the BIG TIME (that was the only issue)!

Russ Cochran has reprinted New Direction in hardback, and hardback Pre-Trends like SADDLE JUSTICE are in the works. A quick correction: Al Feldstein wrote (and had lettered!) a 5-pg "Master Race," Krigstein expanded it to an 8-pger, Kamen did all (4) issues of PSYCHOANALYSIS.

Write to this department like so: FAN CLUB NEWS, RUSS COCHRAN, POB 468, WEST PLAINS, MO 65775.

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot attempt to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, economy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters: be as so we have your address on the individual letter.

The illustration is a re-dress of the one used for the text piece in CRYPT 21 (#5) in 1950, which did not run in our reprint of that issue.

HERE'S A DELIGHTFUL LITTLE TALE FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT! I CALL IT..

A GRAVE GAG!!

THE DOOR TO THE SMALL AMPHITHEATER OPENED, AND THE BLACK-CLAD MOURNERS FILED TIGHT-LIPPED DOWN THE AISLE. THE WOMEN, THEIR FACES VEILED IN FLIMSY BLACK RET... THE MEN, UNCOMFORTABLE IN THEIR STIFFLY STARCHED WHITE SHIRTS AND THEIR NEATLY PRESSED BLACK SUITS...

SOB... SOB...

BUT... WHY... WHY CREMATION?

SH-H-H! IT WAS HIRAM'S LAST REQUEST, SAMUEL!

FINALLY, THEY WERE ALL SEATED ON THE UNCOMFORTABLE STRAIGHT-BACKED BENCHES BEFORE THEM, THE COFFIN OF THE DECEASED RESTED DILERTLY ON THE TRACK OF ROLLERS THAT RAN TOWARD THE BLACK DOOR IN THE BRICK WALL!

IS THAT THE CREMATORIUM, GNAHMY?

CREMATORY, EZNA' YEB' AND SN-H-H-H'

THE FAMILY OF HIRAM WESTLAKE SAT STIFFLY, AS A MINISTER RECITED A SIMPLE SERVICE' HIRAM WESTLAKE HAD BEEN ONE OF *FIVE* BROTHERS' *FOUR* OF THEM HAD GOTTEN MARRIED AND RAISED LARGE FAMILIES' THE *FIFTH* REMAINED SINGLE' HIRAM HAD BEEN THE *FIRST* TO DIE' AS THE MINISTER FINISHED HIS SERVICE...

...AND WE NOW COMMIT THE LAST REMAINS OF OUR BELOVED HIRAM WESTLAKE TO THE CONSUMING FIRE' ASHES TO ASHES.. DUST TO...

THE COFFIN SLID SLOWLY DOWN THE ROLLER TRACK TOWARD THE SMALL DOOR THAT STOOD OPEN NOW' FROM WITHIN, BLASTING HEAT AND DANCING FLAMES LEAPED FORTH...

...FOREVER AND EVER...A-MEN'

THE HEAVY IRON DOOR CLANGED SHUT' THE MOURNERS SAT SILENTLY... HEADS BOWED' FROM BEHIND THE BRICK WALL, A RUSHING ROAR WAS HEARD... THE ROAR OF THE CONSUMING FIRE...

THEN... SUDDENLY... THEY HEARD IT' ALL EYES TURNED TOWARD THE CREMATORY' IT CAME FROM BEHIND THE WALL... A HORRIFIED, BLOOD-CURDLING, HYSTERICAL SCREAM.

EEEEAAAH!

WHAT THE...

THE FRIGHTENED WIDOW JUMPED TO HER FEET' THE GRIEF-STRICKEN MOTHER FAINTED' THE THREE BROTHERS PRESENT LOOKED AT EACH OTHER WIDE-EYED IN DISBELIEF.

IT CAME FROM *INSIDE*...

HE... HE'S *ALIVE*'

DO SOMETHING'

AND THEN BEFORE ANYONE COULD MOVE A FIGURE STEPPED FROM BEHIND THE DRAPERIES TO THE RIGHT OF THE WALL' IT WAS *JONAH WESTLAKE*... THE *FIFTH* BROTHER' HE WAS LAUGHING... *LAUGHING GLEEFULLY*...

A... HAH' *A... HAH'* *HAH-HAH-HAH'* PRETTY GOOD... EH?

YOU... YOU *FIEND*'

HEE, HEE! YEP! THAT WAS *JONAH* WESTLAKE! THE BLACK-SHEEP OF THE WESTLAKE FAMILY! ALWAYS THE *COMEDIAN*.. ALWAYS THE *PRACTICAL JOKER!* SOME *JOKE*, EH? YES, JONAH *LOVED* TO PLAY *PRACTICAL JOKES* ON THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY! HE'D BEEN *DOING* IT FOR *YEARS!* BUT THIS.. *THIS* WAS GOING *TOO FAR*..

JONAH! HOW *COULD* YOU..

I *HATE* YOU!

LEAVE! *GO!* GET *OUT!* *IMMEDIATELY!*

SO JONAH LEFT! HE WAS BANISHED FROM THE FAMILY CIRCLE! HE WAS NEVER INVITED BACK AGAIN...

NO SENSE OF HUMOR! THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG! NOBODY'S GOT A *SENSE OF HUMOR!* HMMPH! CAN'T EVEN PLAY A PRACTICAL JOKE

AND SO THE TIME PASSED! JONAH REMAINED REJECTED FROM THE WESTLAKE FAMILY GROUP! WHEN SAMUEL WESTLAKE.. ONE OF THE BROTHERS.. PASSED AWAY, JONAH WASN'T EVEN INVITED TO THE FUNERAL...

HMMPH! *SOURPUSSES*..THE WHOLE BUNCH OF 'EM! NOT A SMILE IN A CARLOAD! WELL, I'LL SHOW 'EM! *I'LL SHOW 'EM!*

DAILY

SAMUEL WESTLAKE TO BE BURIED

THAT NIGHT, JONAH WESTLAKE ENTERED SAGMOOR CEMETERY! HE CARRIED A SUITCASE AND A COIL OF WIRE! HE MADE HIS WAY ACROSS THE GRAVES TO THE MAUSOLEUM MARKED..

'WESTLAKE'! AH! THIS IS IT! THEY'RE BURYIN' SAM IN THIS MAUSOLEUM TOMONROW! WELL, I'LL SHOW 'EM THE BUMCH OF OL' SOURPUSSES..

JONAH PUSHED OPEN THE MAUSOLEUM DOOR! AFTER A WHILE, HE CAME OUT...LAUGHING! THE NEXT DAY, THE WESTLAKE FAMILY MINUS JOKING JONAH...HAD GATHERED FOR THE INTENMENT OF THEIR BELOVED SAMUEL...

..AND SO, WE COMMIT HIS BODY TO ITS FINAL RESTING PLACE...

BROTHERS AND NEPHEWS LIFTED THE GASKET CONTAIMING THE LAST REMAINS OF SAMUEL WESTLAKE AND CARRIED IT INTO THE MAUSOLEUM! A MOMENT LATER, THEY CAME OUT! THEIR ARMS HUNG LIMPLY AT THEIR SIDES! THE MINISTER STEPPED FORWARD..

..AND NOW AS WE CLOSE THE DOOR

NO! *NO!* *DON'T LOCK ME IN...*

A VOICE! IT CAME FROM INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM FROM THE COFFIN! IT WAS AN EERIE, PLEADING VOICE.
PLEASE.. I'M ALIVE! DON'T BURY ME ALIVE.. PLEASE!
WHAT THE?
HURRY! HURRY!
WHILE THE WIDOW SCREAMED HYSTERICALLY, THE OTHER BROTHERS RUSHED BACK INTO THE MAUSOLEUM.
OPEN THE COFFIN.. QUICKLY!
LET HIM OUT..
HURRY!
THE COFFIN WAS UNLATCHED AND OPENED! INSIDE SAMUEL WESTLAKE LAY PALE AND RIGID! HE WAS QUITE DEAD...
IT...IT'S SOME SORT OF.. JOKE
JONAH! HE'S DONE THIS
LAUGHTER FILLED THE MAUSOLEUM. IT ECHOED FROM WALL TO WALL. CEILING TO FLOOR! IT WAS JONAH'S MOCKING SNEERING LAUGHTER COMING FROM A LOUDSPEAKER!
LOOK!
JONAH, MICROPHONE IN HAND, WAS HANGING ON TO A TREE TO KEEP FROM FALLING. WHEN A MEMBER OF THE WESTLAKE FAMILY SPOTTED HIM! HE WAS LAUGHING SO HARD, TEARS STREAMED DOWN HIS CHEEKS..
HAW-HAW-HAW
THERE HE IS BEHIND THE MAUSOLEUM!
ONE OF THE BROTHERS - INDIGENT - WALKED SLOWLY OVER TO WHERE JONAH STOOD GIGGLING UNCONTROLLABLY AS ROBERT APPROACHED, HE BEGAN TO REMOVE THE BLACK GLOVES HE WAS WEARING.
HEE, HEE.. GASP A HEE..HEE..
JONAH! YOU PERVERTED, SAVAGE-BRAINED MONSTER! HAVE YOU NO PITY FOR SAM'S POOR WIDOW? DO YOU FIND SATISFACTION IN INFLICTING PAIN UPON YOUR KIN?" WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE WHAT AN INHUMAN DESPICABLE HALF-WITTED IDIOT YOU ARE..
...AND THE GIGGLING WAS CUT SHORT BY THE STINGING LASH OF ROBERT'S GLOVES AS HE WHIPPED THEM ACROSS JONAH'S FACE

JONAH'S FACE WAS LIVID WITH RAGE AS ROBERT TURNED HIS BACK AND WALKED AWAY! WHILE THE GROUP OF MOURRERS MOVED DOWN THE GRAVEL PATH, JONAH SWORE A SILENT OATH...

I'LL GET EVEN WITH YOU, ROBERT!

HE CLENCHED HIS FISTS TILL THE KNUCKLES WERE WHITE BLOTCHES..

I'LL GET *EVEN* WITH YOU FOR *THIS!*

JONAH WAITED *TWO YEARS*. .TWO *LONG* YEARS .TO GET EVEN WITH ROBERT! AND THEN HIS CHANCE CAME, WHEN LISA WESTLAKE, ROBERT'S WIFE, PASSED AWAY...

NOW, ROBERT...NOW I'LL HAVE MY *REVENGE!* TOMORROW AT LISA'S FUNERAL! YOU'LL SEE!

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, JONAH SLIPPED INTO THE FUNERAL PARLOR WHERE LISA WESTLAKE'S BODY LAY IN ITS COFFIN! A PLAN HAD FORMED IN JONAH'S WARPED MIND...A FIENDISH PLAN...

THIS WILL BE MY *BEST*...MY *GREATEST PRACTICAL JOKE!*

WHEN NO ONE WAS ABOUT, JONAH REMOVED LISA'S BODY FROM ITS COFFIN...

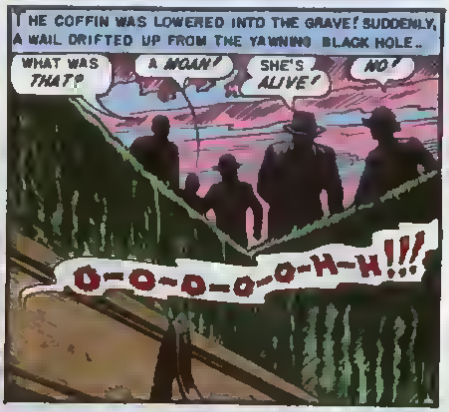
AT THE FUNERAL TODAY, ROBERT, YOU'LL GET THE *SHOCK OF YOUR LIFE!*

ONCE LISA'S BODY WAS SAFELY HIDDEN, JONAH CLIMBED INTO THE COFFIN...

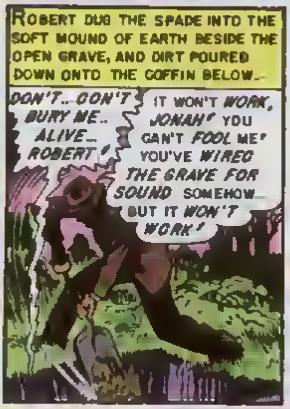
WHEN THEY LOWER THE COFFIN INTO THE GRAVE, YOU'LL HEAR YOUR *WIFE*, ROBERT! HAH, HAH! SHE'LL *MOAN*...*SCREAM*...

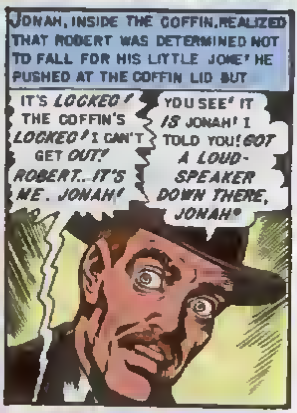
YOU'LL *SEE* THEM TO *STOP!* YOU'LL *OPEN* THE COFFIN... AND I'LL BE THERE... *LAUGHING AT YOU!*

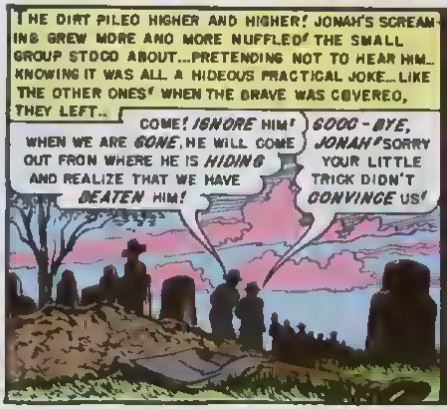
LATER THAT DAY, A SMALL SOBBING GROUP STOOD ABOUT THE COFFIN OF LISA WESTLAKE IN SAGMOOR CEMETERY! AFTER THE SIMPLE CEREMONY...
LOWER THE COFFIN!

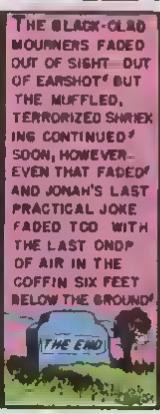

THE COFFIN WAS LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE! SUDDENLY, A WAIL DRIFTED UP FROM THE YAWNING BLACK HOLE..
WHAT WAS THAT?
A MOAN!
SHE'S ALIVE!
NO!
O-O-O-O-O-H-H!!!

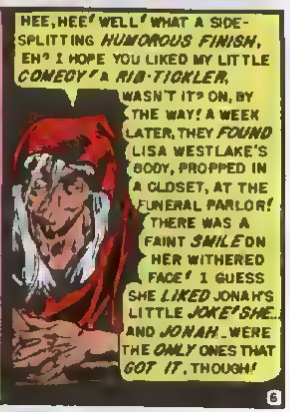
ROBERT STEPPED FORWARD! HE SNATCHED THE SHOVEL FROM A HORRIFIED GRAVEDIGGER..
BUT ..SHE'S ALIVE!
NO! IT'S A TRICK!


ROBERT DUG THE SPADE INTO THE SOFT MOUND OF EARTH BESIDE THE OPEN GRAVE, AND DIRT POURED DOWN ONTO THE COFFIN BELOW..
DON'T.. DON'T BURY ME.. ALIVE... ROBERT!
IT WON'T WORK, JONAH! YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! YOU'VE WIRED THE GRAVE FOR SOUND SOMEHOW... BUT IT WON'T WORK!


JONAH, INSIDE THE COFFIN, REALIZED THAT ROBERT WAS DETERMINED NOT TO FALL FOR HIS LITTLE JOKE! HE PUSHED AT THE COFFIN LID BUT
IT'S LOCKED! THE COFFIN'S LOCKED! I CAN'T GET OUT! ROBERT.. IT'S ME, JONAH!
YOU SEE! IT IS JONAH! I TOLD YOU! GOT A LOUD-SPEAKER DOWN THERE, JONAH!


THE DIRT PILED HIGHER AND HIGHER! JONAH'S SCREAMING GREW MORE AND MORE MUFFLED! THE SMALL GROUP STOOD ABOUT...PRETENDING NOT TO HEAR HIM... KNOWING IT WAS ALL A HIDEOUS PRACTICAL JOKE... LIKE THE OTHER ONES! WHEN THE GRAVE WAS COVERED, THEY LEFT..
COME! IGNORE HIM! WHEN WE ARE GONE, HE WILL COME OUT FROM WHERE HE IS HIDING AND REALIZE THAT WE HAVE BEATEN HIM!
GOOD-BYE, JONAH! SORRY YOUR LITTLE TRICK DIDN'T CONVINCE US!


THE BLACK-CLAD MOURNERS FADED OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF EARSHOT! BUT THE MUFFLED, TERRORIZED SHRIEKING CONTINUED! SOON, HOWEVER.. EVEN THAT FADED! AND JONAH'S LAST PRACTICAL JOKE FADED TOO WITH THE LAST DROP OF AIR IN THE COFFIN SIX FEET BELOW THE GROUND!
THE END


HEE, HEE! WELL! WHAT A SIDE-SPLITTING HUMOROUS FINISH, EH? I HOPE YOU LIKED MY LITTLE COMEDY! A RIB-TICKLER, WASN'T IT? OH, BY THE WAY! A WEEK LATER, THEY FOUND LISA WESTLAKE'S BODY, PROPPED IN A CLOSET, AT THE FUNERAL PARLOR! THERE WAS A FAINT SMILE ON HER WITHERED FACE! I GUESS SHE LIKED JONAH'S LITTLE JOKE! SHE.. AND JONAH.. WERE THE ONLY ONES THAT GOT IT, THOUGH!

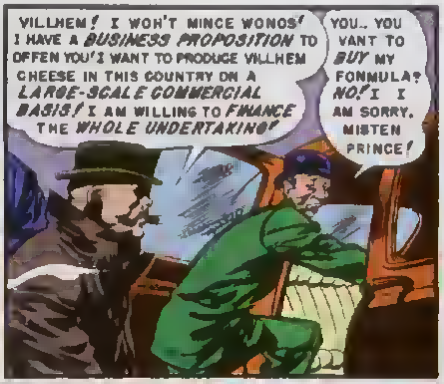
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

NEH, HEH! *GREETINGS!* IT'S NICE TO SEE YOUR *HORROR-HAPPY FACES* ONCE AGAIN! SO YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU ANOTHER OF MY *TALES OF TERROR* THAT I KEEP HERE IN THE *CRYPT*, EH? WELL, COME IN! COME IN AND SIT DOWN BESIDE ME... *THE CRYPT-KEEPER!* I HAVE A REAL *SPINE-TINGLER* READY FOR YOU! WHILE I'M TELLING YOU THIS *CHILLING YARN*, WE CAN AMUSE OURSELVES WITH A FRIENDLY GAME OF *POKER!* I HAVE *ONE* ON THE *FIRE*... GETTING *RED-HOT!* OH, BY THE WAY... I CALL THIS LITTLE *SCREAM-PLAY*.

CHEESE, THAT'S HORRIBLE!

WHEN HENDRICK VILLHEM, A MILD-MANNERED, SHY, QUIET TYPE, ARRIVED HERE FROM HOLLAND TWO YEARS AGO, HE BROUGHT WITH HIM HIS MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION... THE FORMULA FOR MAKING *VILLHEM CHEESE!* AS HE STEPPED OFF THE GANGPLANK IN NEW YORK...

I LEARNED FROM MY CONTACTS ABROAD YOU WOULD BE ON THIS BOAT, SO I CAME DIRECTLY TO NEW YORK TO MEET YOU WHEN YOU LANDED!
VELL! DAT VAS VERY NICE OF YOU, MISTER PRINCE!


VILLHEM! I WON'T MINCE WORDS! I HAVE A BUSINESS PROPOSITION TO OFFER YOU! I WANT TO PRODUCE VILLHEM CHEESE IN THIS COUNTRY ON A LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL BASIS! I AM WILLING TO FINANCE THE WHOLE UNDERTAKING!
YOU.. YOU VANT TO BUY MY FORMULA? NO! I I AM SORRY, MISTER PRINCE!

THE FORMULA FOR VILLHEM CHEESE HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM FADDER TO SON FOR GENERATIONS! I CANNOT SELL IT!
LOOK HERE, VILLHEM! I DON'T WANT TO TAKE YOUR FORMULA AWAY FROM YOU! YOU'LL BE A PARTNER IN THE BUSINESS!

YOU MEAN.. I PUT IN MY FORMULA... UNT YOU PUT IN THE MONEY... AND VE GO FIFTY-FIFTY INTO BUSINESS?
THAT'S THE DEAL, VILLHEM! TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT!
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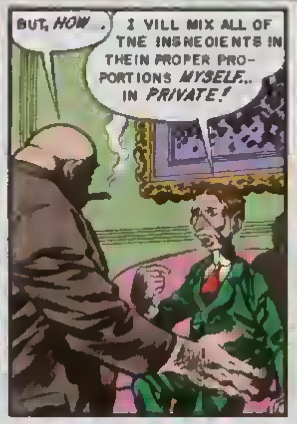
HENDRICK VILLHEM TOOK IT! BUT HE HAD ONE STIPULATION...
WHAT'S THAT, HENDRICK?
I VILL NOT TELL THE FORMULA OR WRITE IT DOWN! IT IS HERE... HERE IN MY HEAD.. AND HERE IT SHALL REMAIN!


BUT, HOW..
I VILL MIX ALL OF THE INGREDIENTS IN THEIR PROPER PROPORTIONS MYSELF.. IN PRIVATE!

WELL, HOW IN BLAZES ARE WE GOING TO TURN THE CHEESES OUT IN QUANTITY, IF YOU HAVE TO MAKE EACH ONE YOURSELF!
DAT, MISTER PRINCE, IS YOUR PROBLEM!

VILLHEM CHEESE WAS *FAMOUS* IN EASTERN EUROPE! ITS DISTINCTIVE *FLAVOR* ...ITS DELICIOUS *TANG* ...WAS A CHEESE-LOVER'S DELIGHT! BRADBURY PRINCE KNEW A GOOD PRODUCT WHEN HE SMELLED IT! SO HE LOST NO TIME IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM HENDRICK VILLHEM HAD PROVOKED...

THERE IT IS, VILLHEM! WHAT DO YOU SAY?

YOU VANT ME TO MAKE CHEESES *SO BIG*...IN *SUCH TREMENDOUS VATS*?

SURE! YOU MIX IT UP JUST LIKE THE LITTLE ONES YOU USED TO MAKE! THEN, WHEN IT HARDENS...WE CUT IT UP! WE COULD GET OVER *TWO-HUNDRED* SMALL CHEESES FROM *ONE* VAT!

BUT IT TAKES *TWO YEARS* TO *AGE*!

WHAT? TWO YEARS?

YAH! DAT'S RIGHT! IT TAKES TWO YEARS TO *AGE PROPERLY*.. TILL THE *BACTERIA* HAS...

BRADBURY PRINCE ALMOST SLEW HIS MILLIONAIRE TOP! HE ALMOST TOOK HENDRICK VILLHEM AND HIS FORMULA AND TOSSED HIM INTO ONE OF THE EMPTY VATS THEY WERE STANDING OVER! BUT THEN... THEN AN IDEA CAME TO HIM! WHY TOSS HIM *NOW*? WHY NOT... IN *TWO YEARS*!

TWO YEARS! IN TWO YEARS HE WOULD HAVE STARTED... LET'S SEE... ABOUT *SIX HUNDRED* VATS OF CHEESE! SIX HUNDRED GIGANTIC CHEESES, *EIGHT FEET* HIGH BY *SIX FEET* ACROSS! THAT WOULD BE PLENTY! *PLENTY!*

YES! YOU GUESSED IT! BRADBURY PRINCE'S IDEA WAS... *MURDER!* IN TWO YEARS... HE WOULD OWN THE BUSINESS...AND SIX HUNDRED HUGE *VILLHEM CHEESES*...OUTRIGHT...

HAH, HAH! WELL, HENDRICK! WHAT'S TWO YEARS, EH? WHAT'S *TWO* YEARS IN A *LIFETIME* PARTNERSHIP?

A MERE... DROP IN THE VAT... MISTER PRINCE!

THAT NIGHT... ALONE IN HIS LUXURIOUS APARTMENT... BRADBURY PRINCE MADE HIS PLANS...

YES, SIR! JUST BEFORE THE FIRST VAT IS BROKEN OPEN AND THE CHEESES CUT AND WRAPPED... I'LL GET RID OF THAT LITTLE... *MOUSE!*

THEN... THEN I'LL HAVE THE OUTPUT OF TWO YEARS COMING OF AGE! I'LL MAKE A FORTUNE... AND THAT LITTLE CREEP... THAT LITTLE MOUSE... WON'T BE THERE TO TAKE HALF OF IT AWAY!
HAH, HAH! THAT'S A GOOD ONE! HAH, HAH! I CALLED HIM A MOUSE! HE'S THE FIRST MOUSE I EVER HEARD OF THAT MAKES HIS OWN CHEESE...
HAH, HAH! A MOUSE! THAT'S WHAT HE IS! A MOUSE! AND I... I'VE GOT HIM TRAPPED!
AND SO... THE P & V CHEESE COMPANY, MAKERS OF THE ORIGINAL DUTCH TYPE VILLHEM CHEESE! WAS BORN! EVERY DAY.. IN DEEP DARK SECRECY, HENDRICK VILLHEM MIXED ANOTHER VAT OF CHEESE...
SUCH TREMENDOUS QUANTITIES! I... I HOPE IT TASTES THE SAME LIKE IN THE OLD COUNTRY!
AND EVERY DAY, ANOTHER VAT OF CHEESE WAS MOVED INTO THE AGING WAREHOUSE FOR A TWO-YEAR STAY...
VELL, MISTER PRINCE! DAT'S NUMBER VUN-HUNDRED AND TEN!
YEP! TIME REALLY FLIES, DOESN'T IT, HENDRICK?
AFTER ALMOST A YEAR AND A HALF HAD PASSED
LOOK, HENDRICK! LOOK! ADVANCED ORDERS! THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF ADVANCED ORDERS! WHEN WILL THE FIRST VAT YOU MIXED BE READY TO OPEN?
LET'S SEE! IN SEVEN MORE MONTHS, MISTER PRINCE!
SEVEN MONTHS.. SEVEN LONG MONTHS! THE ORDERS PILED UP! THE FIRST YEAR'S OUTPUT THREE HUNDRED AND FIVE VATS.. ENOUGH TO MAKE SIXTY-FIVE THOUSAND SMALL CHEESES... HAD ALREADY BEEN SOLD...
TOMORROW, MISTER PRINCE! TOMORROW VE OPEN THE FIRST VAT!
GOOD! GOOD! WE'LL HAVE A CELEBRATION! YOU WON'T HAVE TO MIX A VAT TOMORROW! IT'LL BE A HOLIDAY!

I... I VAS VONDERING, MISTER PRINCE! I VAS VONDERING IF I COULDN'T START DRAWING SOME MONEY FROM THE BUSINESS, NOW! VE MUST HAVE COLLECTED PLENTY OF MONEY ALREADY IN ADVANCED ORDERS!
SURE, HENDRICK! SURE! AFTER TOMORROW! AFTER THE VAT IS OPENED, AND THE CHEESE IS TASTED!
YES, MISTER PRINCE! I UNDERSTAND! I UNDERSTAND! YOU ARE VORRYING IT MAY NOT BE GOOD, YES?
MAYBE, HENDRICK! MAYBE! NOW WHY DON'T YOU DO MIX UP TODAY'S VAT!
HENDRICK VILLHEM LEFT BRADBURY PRINCE'S OFFICE, AS THE DOOR CLOSED, BRADBURY LEANED BACK IN HIS SWIVEL CHAIR AND ROARED WITH LAUGHTER...
HAW, HAW! WHAT A MEEK CREEP! WHAT A MOUSE!
HE STOOD UP! HIS FACE REDDENED! HIS EYES BULGED IN VIOLENT ANGER...
TODAY'S THE DAY, HENDRICK! TODAY'S THE DAY YOU GET YOURS... YOU MOUSE!
BRADBURY PRINCE OPENED THE DOOR TO HIS OFFICE AND PEERED DOWN THE CORRIDOR TOWARD THE MIXING ROOM...
DOOR'S LOCKED! ALWAYS LOCKS IT! AFRAID I'LL STEAL HIS STUPID FORMULA! FOOL! MOUSEY FOOL! I'VE GOT A SKELETON KEY!
BRADBURY MOVED DOWN THE CORRIDOR AND STOPPED BEFORE THE MIXING-ROOM DOOR, HE COULD SEE HENDRICK INSIDE... STIRRING THE HUGE VAT FROM THE PLATFORM THAT CROSSED OVER IT! SLOWLY HE UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND STEPPED INSIDE.
GOT TO BE QUIET... LIKE A CAT... STALKING A MOUSE... HEH, HEH...
THE STARTLED HENDRICK VILLHEM SCREAMED AS BRADBURY PRINCE PUSHED! HIS EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEK ECHOED FROM WALL TO WALL...
EEEE
AAH!
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THE CHURNING AND SPLASHING IN THE VAT STOPPED AFTER A FEW MINUTES! HENDRICK VILLNEM WAS DEAD! DROWNED IN HIS OWN CHEESE...
I'LL LEAVE HIS BODY THERE! THE CHEESE WILL HARDEN...AND IN TWO YEARS..., WELL, TWO YEARS IS A LONG TIME!
THE VAT CONTAINING HENDRICK VILLNEM'S BODY WAS PUSHED INTO THE ASIAS WAREHOUSE, AND STORED IN ITS PROPER PLACE..
IN TWO YEARS, THE INVESTIGATIONS INTO HIS 'MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE' WILL HAVE BEEN OVER! IT WILL HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN!
612
613
THAT NIGHT, AS BRADBURY PRINCE LAY IN HIS BED...
CAN'T SEEM TO FALL ASLEEP TONIGHT! BEEN TOSSING AND TURNING FOR THREE HOURS! KEEP THINKING ABOUT VILLNEM IN THAT CHEESE! SUPPOSE...SUPPOSE THEY OPEN THAT ONE TOMORROW?
BRADBURY PRINCE SOT UP! HE DRESSED QUICKLY...
GOT TO GET OVER TO THE WAREHOUSE! GOT TO SEE IF THE VAT IS IN ITS RIGHT PLACE...LAST IN LINE...NOT FIRST!
AS BRADBURY WALKED DOWN THE DARK DESERTED STREET...
EVERYTHING LOOKS STRANGE... WEIRD...
AS HE WALKED ALONG, A SOFT PADDING SOUND SEEMED TO BE FOLLOWING HIM..
IT SOUNDS...LIKE... LIKE AN ANIMAL! A GIANT ANIMAL...
THE PADDING WAS CLOSER, NOW! BRADBURY TURNED AND...
GOOD LORD! EYES! THE EYES OF A CAT!
6

BRADBURY DANTED INTO A DOONWAY AND SLAMMED THE DODR BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE SHINING, GLEAMING EYES...

I...I SEEM TO BE IN A DESERTED WAREHOUSE! IT... IT'S DANK IN HERE...

HE MOVED THROUGH THE DARKNESS! HE NO LONGER COULD HEAR THE SCRATCHING ON THE DOOR THROUGH WHICH HE HAD ENTERED! HE PASSED THROUGH A LOW OPENING LIKE A ROUGHLY HEWN HOLE IN THE WALL, AND THEN...

LOOKS LIKE A *PLATFORM*... WITH A METAL RAIL AROUND IT...

BRADBURY MOUNTED THE PLATFORM AND MOVED ALONG IT! A STRANGE COIL OF METAL CROSSED IT! HE CLIMBED OVER IT...

IT'S LIKE...LIKE A HUGE *SPRING*...

AND THEN HE SAW IT... THE LARGE WEDGE OF CHEESE ...VILLHELM CHEESE! HE COULD TELL IT BY THE FAMILIAR SMELL! BUT WHAT WAS THAT *IN* IT... *IN THE CHEESE*!

GOOD LORD IT'S A PART OF HENDRICK VILLHELM'S BODY... HIS *HANDS* STICKING OUT! I...I...

BRADBURY PRINCE LEANED AGAINST THE HUGE WEDGE OF CHEESE ...SICK! IT TILTED SLIGHTLY! SUDDENLY HE HEARD A CLICK AND THE SOUND OF METAL SINGING THROUGH THE AIR...

NO...NO ..YA-A-A-A-H!

OUTSIDE OF BRADBURY PRINCE'S LUXURIOUS BEDROOM, HIS BUTLER WAS JUST GETTING READY TO RETIRE WHEN HE HEARD THE SHRIEK OF HORROR CUT SHORT BY THE LOUD SHARP SNAP! HE RUSHED IN...

MR. PRINCE! I...I... GULP! HE... HE'S BEEN *SEVERED IN HALF!*

HEH, HEH! WELL, THAT'S MY STORY, KIDDIES! OLD BRADBURY HAD BEEN *DREAMING!* THE *ONLY* PUZZLING THING IS: IF HE WAS ONLY DREAMING THAT HE GOT CAUGHT IN THAT HUGE *MOUSE-TRAP*, WHAT WAS THE *SNAP* THE BUTLER HEARD? AND WHAT MADE BRADBURY GO TO *PIECES*? WELL, LOOKS LIKE HENDRICK WASN'T THE THE *ONLY MOUSEY* CHARACTER IN THIS STORY, EH? MR. PRINCE REALLY *ENDED UP* LIKE ONE A *MOUSE*, THAT IS! 'BYE, NOW! OH, BY THE WAY! NEXT TIME YOU EAT VILLHELM CHEESE... DON'T *STUDY* IT TOO CAREFULLY! YOU MIGHT FIND A BIT OF *HENDRICK!*

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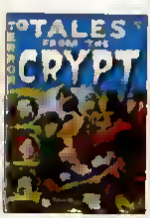

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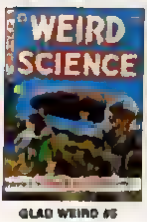

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